[redacted] H [redacted]

Chief, [redacted] G 22 July 1954

Chief, Contact Division [redacted] G

H Case [redacted] Request for Seeds of Peganum harmala L. "African Rue."

G 1. [redacted] requests that we obtain one pound or more of the sun dried seeds of subject named herb. These seeds will be used for continuing research concerning the hypnotic and narcotic effects of certain plants. Soviet interest in this particular plant is evidenced by the enclosed attachment taken from a book published in 1949.

2. According to information available here this plant was recently introduced in the United States and is reported to have been established on a dry range near [redacted] by about I 1940. It is native to North Africa and Arabia and is known to grow eastward as far as Tibet. It is a perennial herb with much branched stems and alternate leaves which are parted or divided into linear segments. The flowers are axillary with five sepals, five petals, yellow, and about 1 cm long. There are fifteen stamens and a solitary pistil. The fruit is a many seeded capsule. [redacted] H

3. The seeds and leaves of this plant are known to contain toxic alkaloids including Harmine and Harmaline. [redacted] C I C [redacted] reported the death of guinea pigs upon the experimental feedings of seeds and alkaloids extracted from the leaves.

G 4. [redacted] also advises that another plant, Peganum Mexicanum, A. Gray, which is closely related to Peganum harmala L., is also believed to have a toxic effect. This herb is collected on the sides of the Chiricahua Mountains in East Cochise County, Arizona and has also been seen in Southeastern Texas and Northeastern Mexico. We are requested to obtain a pound or more sun dried seeds of this plant as it is also known to contain Harmaline.

5. There are funds available for the procurement of the items mentioned in this memo. If special expenditures are necessary we will advise you of the proper allotment number.

B [redacted] H [redacted]

[redacted]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE 1 JUN 1978

4-289

6. It is suggested that these requirements may be filled by contacting staff members of the [redacted]. In addition to the seed of the plants it would be highly desirable to obtain several carefully dried specimens of the entire plant.

B

7. FBI considerable checking was done before it was decided that the most effective method of handling this case was through ONI rather than the Liaison Division of [redacted] G

A [redacted]

A [redacted]

Enclosure: (1)